REMARKS

The examiner has objected to the claims, specification and drawings under 35U.S.C.112 but it is believed that the changes currently being made by this amendment to the specification, claims and drawings will place the application in condition for no further objections under 35 U.S.C.112. With the two sheets of replacement drawings, the numeral 65 has been replaced with the original numeral 64 and the thru-hole in Fig.15A has been numbered as thru-hole 111. It should be appreciated that a complete substitute specification was filed in this application on May 21, 2004, even though the original application was filed on October 21, 2003. This may have some significance because the enclosed replacement page 14 corresponds exactly to page 14 of the substitute specification but everything is off one line from that which was filed originally October 21,2003. In this regard, it is believed that a new page 14 was required instead of page 4.

The examiner has raised one rejection of the drawing that is not believed to necessary. The examiners rejection of the drawing and consequently of the related claims is based, in substance, upon the position that the plastic ring 130 in Fig. 21A is not illustrated as being bonded to the ring 80. It is respectfully submitted that there is no way to illustrate that bond because once bonded, one could never see the inter face between the band 80 and the plastic band 130, although the top edges are illustrated in Fig. 21A. The undersigned attorney for the applicants is not aware of how this could otherwise be illustrated. It should be noted that a replacement drawing for Fig. 13B was submitted to the Patent Office for filing in this application illustrating the interior surface with the saw tooth profile as was required earlier in this prosecution. The statement made by the examiner would lead one to believe that maybe that substitute drawing was not entered into this file but we will of course submit another copy of that drawing if that is necessary.

The applicants note that there has been a provisional double patenting rejection which may be forthcoming but the other application upon which the double patenting would eventually be based, has not yet matured into a U.S. patent but it has been allowed and the issue fee will be payed later this month. We will file a terminal disclaimer should that requirement be made final.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested for Claims 1,3-8, and 10-14, as amended, said claims having been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 based upon various

combinations of U.S. Patent Number 5706894 to Hawkins (the '894 patent) U.S. Patent Number 2628134 to Williams, et al (the '134 patent) and U.S. Patent Number 2175414 to Stevenson (the '414 patent). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The applicants are quite familiar with the '894 patent to Hawkins because it is assigned to Frank's International, Inc., the assignee of this present application. Samuel P. Hawkins, III, the named inventor in the '894 patent is one of the joint inventors in this present application. Addressing first the '894 patent since it is the primary reference cited against all of the pending claims, it should be appreciated that the '894 patent is directed to a stop collar which can only be used a single time. Moreover there is no reason for the stop collar shown in the '894 patent to ever be used more than once. It is typically used on steel casing which is cemented in a wellbore and is typically never removed from the wellbore. The stop collar is used not as a device which allows the casing to be picked up but is used as a means of suspending various downhole tools on and in the casing for repair and maintenance purposes (See Column 1, lines 8-14). Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, the stop collar in the '894 patent could not be used to pick up the casing because there is no teaching, disclosure or even a suggestion of removing the stop collar from the casing 7 as illustrated in Fig. 1.

The stop collar illustrated in Fig. 1 of the '894 patent shows an inner ring 2 having teeth 6 on its one face which can move along the interior surface of the outer ring 1. Before sliding the stop collar over the top end of the casing, the inner ring 2 is put into place within the outer ring 1 and one or more screws such as 3A and 3B are threaded into the outer ring 1 and the inner ring 2 to temporarily hold the inner ring in place within the outer ring. Once the assembled stop collar is at the desired location along the length of the casing 7, the one or more screws such as screws 3A and 3B are removed and the inner ring 2 snaps into place against the casing 7 (see column 3 lines 64-67). Thereafter, whenever a load is exerted from above the stop collar such as illustrated in Fig. 3 or below the stop collar such as is illustrated in Fig. 4, the inner ring 2 will either slide upwardly with respect to outer ring 1 or downwardly with respect to the outer ring 1 and makes the inner ring grip even tighter against the casing 7. However, it is at this point that there is no way remove the stop collar from the casing 7 even if one wanted to. As shown in Fig.'s 3 and 4, the screw 3 cannot be reinserted into the inner and outer rings because the through ports in those two rings are misaligned. It is thus very clear that the stop collar shown and described in the '894 patent would never be used as a load lift ring because in using a load lift ring, once the casing has been picked up and

threaded into the string of casing, the load lift ring is removed by sliding it back over the top of the casing as is described and claimed in this present application. As is set forth in Claims 1 and 8, the load ring is first activated to grip the exterior surface of the tubular and then by releasing the handle, the band is released from the non-threaded exterior surface of the tubular. This cannot be done with the '894 patent. Claims 1 and 8 are the only independent claims pending in this application and each of those claims calls for the handle to not only cause the gripping of the tubular but also the release of the tubular.

The '134 patent to Williams does not provide any help in modifying the '894 patent above discussed to meet either of the independent Claims 1 and 8. The '134 patent is somewhat non-analogous art because its exterior surface is made from rubber, identified as the sleeve 1, which could not be used by an elevator to lift up steel casing. Even the top and bottom surfaces of the protective collar are chamfered to allow the tubular in the '414 patent to facilitate the longitudal movement of the tubular within the interior of the steel well casing (See column 2 lines 37-40). Not only are the ends chamfered but they are made out of rubber (See Fig. 1). This would provide no surface against which an elevator could be used to lift the casing. Having both a soft and a tapered surface would just not allow their use is picking up a length of casing which may weigh 10 -15,000 thousand pounds. Perhaps more importantly, the steel band 3 which is shown in Fig.2 of the '134 patent and which either expands or contracts by the use of the handle 6b in Fig. 4, never contacts the steel pipe 2. It somehow or another causes the rubber layer to be compressed but that would be so flimsy that it could not possibly be used to support a length of steel casing which has to be picked up in the air and which if dropped may kill several rig hands on the rig floor. There simply is nothing within the '134 reference to Williams that could be combined with the '894 patent to render any of the present claims obvious as contemplated by 35 U.S.C. 103.

In a similar vein, the Stevenson '414 patent is a thread protector and is used only on one or the other end of the tubular. As shown in Fig.1 of the '414 patent the thread protector is used to contact the male threads themselves. In Fig.5, the thread protector is used to protect the internal ,female threads at the box end of the tubular by forcing some soft materials into the end of the pipe. It is thus submitted that the Stevenson '414 patent cannot be combined with the '894 patent or the Williams '134 patent because there would be no incentive to combine these references. Each of the three patents are directed to totally different end uses and could not be combined to make the Claims 1 and 8 obvious without using the present application as a blueprint for making such a

combination.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1,3-8, and 10-14 be withdrawn based upon any combination of the '894 patent, the '414 patent, and the '134 patent. Each of these claims is believed to be in prima facie condition for allowance.

It is believed that there is no additional fee which or due in payably for filing this amendment, but should such a fee be due or payable, the Commissioner of Patents is authorized to deduct such payment from the Deposit Account Number 13-2166.

The undersigned attorney for the applicants would appreciate a telephone conference with the examiner should the examiner be of the opinion that such a conference would be helpful in furthering the prosecution of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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REPLACEMENT PAGE

[[Paragraph]] Fig. 5 shows a prior art nubbin 50 having a collar 52 and a threaded portion 54 having male threads which can be threaded into, for example, the box end 12 of the tubular joint 10 illustrated in FIG. 1.

REPLACEMENT PAGE

Referring now to FIG.'s 13A and 13B, an isometric view of the latch assembly 100 is illustrated which shows the band 80 illustrated in FIG.'s 9, 10 and 11 that shows, in addition, the latch assembly 100 which is used to narrow the gap 84 illustrated in FIG. 11. A padeye 102 is attached to the other end of the band 80. A draw bolt 106 passes through the padeye 102 and has a spring [[108]] 109 which is held on to the draw bolt 106 by a nut 110 which can be adjusted as needed, to vary the tension in the band and control the grip action of the band 80. A handle 112 is attached to a padeye 104.

have its shoulder end 64 placed over the casing joint first and when properly positioned, usually a foot or so below the box end of the tubular joint 10, then the handle 112 for the latch mechanism 100 will be rotated away from the end having the nut 110 thereon. The latch is illustrated in the closed position in FIG. 13B. Closing the handle that way causes the two ends of the band 80 to be brought closer together where the internal diameter of the band is resting up against the exterior of the tubular joint 10. As seen in FIG.'s 8 and 9-11, as the inclined surface 82, shown in FIG. 10, tries to run down the inclined surface 81 of FIG. 8, the band 80 moves tighter and tighter against the external surface of the tubular joint 10. The additional weight of the casing joint only tends to make the connection tighter and tighter against the external surface of the tubular joint 10.

When using the apparatus shown in FIG. 6 with the band 80 therein, and when the device is to be used as a thread protector, it will be turned upside-down and run past the pin end 14 to a point at which the band 80 will contact the exterior surface of the tubular joint 10, but the body 90 of the thread protector shown in FIG. 12 will not contact the threads of the pin end 14. Any movement of the casing joint 10 with respect to the thread protector, only makes the band 80 go tighter against the exterior surface of the tubular joint 10, which prevents the thread protector from falling off of the tubular joint 10 and will thus protect the threads of the pin end 14 until such time as the handle 112 is rotated back the other direction to allow the band 80 to fit more loosely around the tubular joint 10, and thus allow the thread protector to be easily removed from the tubular joint 10.

Referring now to FIG. 20, a prior art joint of oilfield tubular 10 such as is illustrated in greater detail in FIG. 1, and having an upper box end 12 and a lower pin end 14, is illustrated as having a load lifting ring 60 in accordance with the present invention attached near the upper box